(d) A permanent cessation of cross-border terrorism against India is necessary to diffuse the current tension between India and Pakistan.

Long lasting relationship with Afghanistan

240. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government of Afghanistan has sought long lasting relationship with India in the sectors of education, health and aviation;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Governments response in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) to (c) Government is committed to strengthening and diversifying its bilateral ties with the government of Afghanistan. During the visit of H.E. Mr. Hamid Karzai, Chairman of the Afghan Interim Administration, and now President of the Transitional Government, several areas of cooperation, including Health, Education, Information Technology, Public Transport, Industry, Energy and Training were identified.

India is committed and has provided extensive humanitarian, project and financial assistance to Afghanistan including in the field of health with the supply of medical stores and medical services, and setting up of artificial limbs center in Kabul. Government is working closely with the Afghan government to finalize modalities for the construction of new schools and rehabilitation of existing schools.

Government is also in the process of finalizing details for handing over of three aircraft from Air India to Ariana Afghan Airlines.